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UNCLAS OTTAWA 001550

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHING INVITEES TO THE US-EU INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON IRAQ

REF: SECSTATE 93742

1. This is an action request, see para. 6.

2. Poloff delivered reftel points to Ann Flanagan-Whalen, Deputy Director for the Middle East Division of Foreign Affairs Canada. Ms. Flanagan-Whalen said FAC has not yet received the EU invite and was pleased to get the detail which we provided. She said that assuming Canada is invited to the Cairo PrepComm, in addition to one individual from FAC, Ottawa would like to send the Director of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Iraq Task Force. She also assumes that Canadian Ambassador Michael Bell, Chair of the International Reconstruction Fund for Iraq will be invited.

3. Ms. Flanagan-Whalen said that Canada was pleased with the appointment of Ambassador Bell because of the central role he can play to improve donor coordination, and start to shift the file more directly to the Iraqi government. In addition to better horizontal integration of donor activities, Bell hopes to ensure a smooth transition leading into the Amman conference in July, without any gaps in assistance. She mentioned, for example, that there are some 55 countries involved in the training of Iraqi diplomats, but there is not a central coordinating body or mechanism for ensuring consistency of how the training is provided. Flanagan-Whalen also mentioned her understanding that Japan was taking on the lead role of the working groups on reconstruction. She asked who would be heading up the three subgroups in the conference (political, economic/reconstruction, and security).

4. Flanagan-Whalen asked if we had any ideas on the draft communique that we were prepared to share. She said that in the coming days Canada would share with us some ideas in the area of donor coordination.

5. With regards to the drafting of the constitution and the political process, Flanagan-Whalen said that Canada remains dedicated to helping advance the process in any way possible. Elections Canada remains committed to assisting with the coming rounds of elections, although Elections Canada director Jean Pierre Kingsley will, of course be distracted by any domestic electoral activity. Flanagan-Whalen said she did hope that the referendum and the election, which are scheduled very close together, are synchronized in terms of process and registration. She also mentioned that the Canadian Forum of Federations was working with NDI on a project of federalism training or seminars for Iraq. She stressed the importance of selling the constitution to the Iraqi people in terms of public education, which will play an essential role in the ultimate success of the political process.

6. Flanagan-Whalen also mentioned that the Canadian Ambassador in Amman would soon be dual-accredited to serve also in Iraq. Canada will continue to have a liaison officer in Baghdad with only a few officers there until the security situation allows for the establishment of a full diplomatic presence.

7. Action Request: Ms. Flanagan Whalen asked the following questions for which we promised a response:

-- Any advance thoughts on the draft communique.
-- Who will be the heads of the three conference subgroups and any other information on the organization of the conference.

An e-mail response to Poloff Keith Mines would suffice.

8. Minimize Considered.

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